UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

E

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ECA/PSD.4/27
29 January 1986

Original: ENGLISH
FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Fourth Session of the Joint Conference
of African Planners, Statisticians and
Demographers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 3 - 14 March 1986

E/ECA/PSD.4/27

REPORT ON THE AFRICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION

C O N T E N T S

		Paragraph	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	1
II.	ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL	3 - 8	1 - 2
III.	ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION	9 - 21	3 - 5
IV.	CONCLUSIONS	22 - 24	6

I. INTRODUCTION

1. It will be recalled that at its third session held in Addis Ababa in March 1984, the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers decided to:

(a) Adopt the constitution of the African Statistical Association;

(b) Adopt as working languages of the Association Arabic, English and French;

(c) Locate the administrative and financial secretariat temporarily within the Statistics Division of ECA;

(d) Approve in principle the nomination of candidates to be elected as Council members while recalling that in conformity with the Constitution, any group of 10 ordinary members can nominate its own candidates;

(e) Include the name of a Statistician working in Addis Ababa in the list of nominees for the post of Auditor;

(f) Waive the payments of membership dues for 1984 to enable the Council to work out modalities of payment.

2. The Conference also recognized the need to carefully define criteria for selecting members of the Council.

II. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

3. Article 23 of the Constitution of the Association states that the ad hoc committee appointed by the second Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers will carry out the functions entrusted to the Nominations Committee as far as the first elections are concerned.

4. The Ad Hoc Committee comprising Mr. Mitiku Beyene, Manager of the Ethiopian Central Statistical Office, Mr. K. T. de Graft-Johnson, Chief, ECA Statistics Division and Mr. R. Andrianasolo, Chief, Censuses and Surveys Advisory Service, ECA Statistics Division, immediately started making arrangements for drawing up the final list of candidates for election to offices on the Council in conformity with the decisions taken by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers at its third session. It nominated French-speaking candidates for the Office of President of the Association and English-speaking

Candidates for the Office of President-elect to maintain a linguistic balance in the composition of the Council. Arabic-speaking candidates will be given one of the four posts of Vice-President for which appointment is on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. As the Joint Conference also recommended, one of the posts of Auditor will be reserved for candidates based in Addis Ababa, ECA headquarters.

5. Finally, in conformity with the provisions of article 14 of the constitution of the Association, the ad hoc committee included in its list of candidates for election to membership of the Council, candidates nominated by a group of 10 ordinary members of the United Republic of Tanzania.

6. Ballot forms were mailed on 7 September 1984 to the 450 ordinary members of the Association who had completed the preliminary enrolment forms. The ad hoc Committee received 75 replies within the deadline for election which was extended because of communications problems between the countries of the region.

7. By a circular dated 21 January 1985, the ad hoc committee informed all ordinary members of the Association who had completed the preliminary enrolment forms about the outcome of the elections of members to the Council.

8. The ECA Statistics Division wrote on 12 March 1985 to all elected members of the Council to congratulate them upon their election, inform them that ECA had requested the President of the Association to contact other members of the Council in order to launch the activities of the Association and confirm that the ECA Secretariat was willing to help the Council in carrying out its tasks. A complete list of members of the Council together with their addresses (see annex) as well as copies of the constitution and rules of procedure of the Association were attached to the letter.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION

9. On 22 March 1985 the President of the Association, Mr. Lamine Diop, Director of the European Centre for Advanced Training in Statistics and Economics for Developing Countries (CESD), wrote to members of the Executive Committee of the Association, with a copy to all members of the Council, informing them about the urgent problems he had identified and to which solutions had to be found to enable the Association to function smoothly. The problems mainly concerned:

(a) Finalizing and disseminating the amended text of the constitution and rules of procedure of the Association;

(b) The appointment of an interim Executive-Secretary who would carry out his functions free of charge within the Statistics Division of ECA;

(c) Defining modalities for payment of dues by members of the Association;

(d) and preparation of a work programme including the publication of the Journal of the Association.

10. Following the suggestions of the President of the Association, the final text of the constitution and rules of procedure of the Association were sent in French and English to all members of the Association, i.e. those who had completed and returned to ECA the preliminary enrolment forms. Copies of the Constitution and rules of procedure were also sent to potential members and to institutions and individuals concerned with the development of statistics in Africa. There are also plans to translate the texts into Arabic for dissemination to Arabic-speaking members and potential members.

11. With respect to the appointment of an interim Executive Secretary, the ECA Statistics Division proposed one of its members, Mr. E. F. Ching'anda (Malawi), Statistical Training Adviser, to fill the position.

12. Some members of the Association sent letters to the ECA Statistics Division to hail the successful election of members of the Council and to make inquiries about the programme of activities of the Association. The programme of activities is in fact one of the priority concerns of the President of the Association who proposed the holding in Addis Ababa from 5 to 10 July 1985 of the initial meeting of the Executive Committee. In conformity with the provisions of Article 10 of the Association's constitution, the Executive Committee comprises the President, the President-elect, the Secretary-General and Treasurer and the Editor-in-Chief. The President initiated negotiations with the Statistical Office of the European Communities to finance the meeting; he indicated that the chances of obtaining funding for the meeting were very high. Unfortunately, the dates proposed coincided with the holding of the Economic Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa during the period 10 to 24 July 1985. The period August-October 1985 did not suit members of the Committee either because of various prior commitments.

13. Finally, the initial meeting of the Executive Committee was held in Addis Ababa on 11 and 12 November 1985 after the fourth meeting of Directors of Centres participating in the Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA). The following items were put on the agenda of the initial meeting:

1. Interpretation of the terms of reference of the Executive Committee and of the Council of AFSA;

2. Amounts and modalities of payment of dues;

3. Financing of meetings: Executive Committee, Council, General Assembly;

4. AFSA publications;

5. Proposals with respect to a work programme to be submitted to the Council and to the General Assembly;

6. Any other business.

14. The Chief of the Statistics Division and the Chief of the Censuses and Surveys Advisory Service of ECA participated in the meeting as observers. The conclusions of the meeting will be submitted to the initial meeting of the Council of the Association in March 1986 before being considered by the General Assembly whose initial meeting is also scheduled for March 1986 during the Fourth Session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers. A second meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled a few days before the Fourth Session of the Joint Conference in order to finalize among other things, the recommendations to be submitted to the Council and to the General Assembly.

15. It should also be noted that the President and President-elect of the Association had convened on 19 March 1985, in Amsterdam during the 44th Session of the International Statistical Institute, a meeting to brief Africans attending the 44th Session. Apart from information on the creation of the Association and conditions of membership, views were exchanged on various important issues such as the headquarters of the administrative secretariat, meetings of the General Assembly, payment of dues, the Journal of the Association and publicity with respect to the Association.

16. With respect to the administrative headquarters of the secretariat, participants were of the opinion that it was not an urgent problem since it was temporarily located within the Statistics Division of ECA in Addis Ababa. The question of transferring the headquarters to another place could only be considered when a satisfactory offer had been made by a country of the region to host the permanent headquarters of the Association.

17. Participants felt that it was practical to organize meetings of the General Assembly of the Association during the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers which was held during even years. However, some participants hoped that in the long run the meetings of the General Assembly of the Association would be organized independently from other meetings to enable more members to participate in them.

18. With respect to the payment of dues, participants stressed the urgent need to resolve the problem concerning methods of payment because of foreign exchange controls in many countries of the region. It was agreed that the mobilization of financial resources was one of the priority tasks of the Executive Committee and of the Council in order to enable the Association to operate normally. In addition to resources from dues and activities of the Association, it would be necessary to negotiate for subsidies and gifts from institutions and organizations interested in the development of statistics in Africa.

19. The meeting recommended that because of the time required to do so, work on the establishment of the Journal of the Association should begin without any delay. They stressed the need to pay particular attention to the scientific aspect of the Journal which should serve as a means of disseminating statistical knowledge on experiences in the region and elsewhere. It was suggested that the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal should be assisted by other members. The meeting felt that for the Journal to be successful the help of competent members would have to be enlisted, suitable and regular quantities of articles would have to be received and the best articles selected to ensure that the publication was of good quality.

20. With respect to publicity, the meeting felt that it was useful to inform all potential members as well as all those who were involved in the development of statistics in Africa (individuals, research institutes, private and public institutions, international organizations etc.) about the existence of the Association. To that end, it was suggested that articles on the Association should be published in magazines and newspapers with a wide circulation.

21. Finally, the meeting was informed of the recent establishment of the Association des statisticiens et demographes de Côte D'Ivoire (ASDECI) whose President, Mr. Daho Balary, was attending the meeting and of the existence in Egypt of a strong Association of Statisticians which could assist the African Statistical Association in one way or the other.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

22. Decisions regarding matters of crucial importance to the Association would henceforth be made by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, it was deemed important to recommend that the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, and Demographers should draw the attention of ECA member States to the existence of the African Statistical Association (AFSA) and of the Union for African Population Studies (UAPS) in order to facilitate as much as possible the participation of African statisticians and demographers in the activities of AFSA and UAPS especially with respect to the payment of dues. Indeed, Africa's current economic situation and the various foreign exchange regulations in force in countries of the region might hamper the development of the Association and of the Union.

23. The tenure of office of the ad hoc committee set up by the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers at its second session is coming to an end. The members of the ad hoc committee would like to sincerely thank all those who assisted them and made it easier for them to accomplish their duties.

24. In conclusion, it is proposed that the Joint Conference:

(a) Should make comments and remarks on how the ad hoc committee carried out its mandate; and

(b) Make general recommendations on how to promote the activities of AFSA and UAPS.

ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION (AFSA)
MEMBRES ELUS DU CONSEIL DE L'ASSOCIATION AFRICAINE DE STATISTIQUE (AFSA)

President/Président

M. Lamine Diop
Directeur
Centre européen de formation des statisticiens économistes de pays en développement (CESD)
3, Avenue Pierre Larousse
92240 Malakoff
France

President-elect/Président-élu

Prof. Biyi Afonja
Head
Department of Statistics
University of Ibadan
Ibadan
Nigeria

Vice-President/Vice Président

- North Africa/Afrique du nord

M. Tadili Faris
Directeur
Direction de la statistique
Secrétariat au plan, au développement régional et à la formation des cadres
B.P. 178
Rabat
Maroc

- West Africa/Afrique de l'ouest

Prof. S.I.K. Odoom 1/
Head
Department of Statistics
University of Ghana
P.O. Box 115
Legon
Ghana

- Central Africa/Afrique centrale

M. Martin K. Balepa
Directeur national du recensement
Ministère du plan et de l'aménagement du territoire
Yaoundé
Cameroun

- East and Southern Africa/Afrique de l'est et australe

Mr. David Jim Mzite
Deputy Director
Central Statistical Office
P.O. Box 8063
Causeway
Harare
Zimbabwe

Secretary-General and Treasurer/Secrétaire général et trésorier

M. Ousmane Balde
Directeur des études à l'ENSEA
06 B.P. 3
Abidjan 06
Cote d'Ivôire

Editor-in-Chief/Rédacteur en chef

M. A.K. Amelewonou
Statistician
Statistics Division
UNECA
P.O. Box 3005
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Auditors/Vérificateurs des comptes

- Mr. A. Cummings-Palmer
Chief
General Economic Statistics Section
Statistics Division
UNECA
P.O. Box 3005
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

- Mr. J. Nekovole
Central Bureau of Statistics
P.O. Box 30266
Nairobi
Kenya

- M. Keita Nedelmbo
Directeur
Direction de la statistique
Ministère du Plan et de l'industrie
B.P. Vbb
Abidjan 01
Côte d'Ivoire

1/ Prof. Odoom is currently on sabbatical leave at the University of Liberia.
Le Prof. Odoom est actuellement en congé sabbatique à l'Université du Libéria.